

**Cheryl Duckworth
Ambassador John W. McDonald**

Demos Kratos

New Expressions of "People Power" Across the Globe

**Occasional Paper Number 14
August, 2004**



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Occasional Paper Series**

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**Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy
Arlington, VA**

This Occasional Paper is dedicated to Margy Siver.

de·moc·ra·cy (di mak're se) *n.* [Gr *demokratia* < *demos*, the people + *kratein*, to rule < *kratos*, strength] **1** government in which the people hold the ruling power either directly or through elected representatives **2** a country, state, etc. with such government **3** majority rule **4** the principle of equality of rights, opportunity, and treatment **5** the common people, esp. as the wielders of political power



Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy

Demos Kratos
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by

Cheryl Duckworth
&
Ambassador John W. McDonald

First they ignore you.

Then they laugh at you.

Then they fight you.

Then you win.

~Mahatma Gandhi

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Introduction

With the smoke of a genocidal civil war scarcely cleared, over half a million people descended upon Belgrade with bread and bricks—bricks not for throwing but for rebuilding, as they demanded that Milosevic’s fraudulent election be recalled. Although some demonstrators were met with violence, they did not return it. Still, a dictator fell.

A mass of young protestors gathered from all reaches of Georgia, storming the government and parliament buildings, armed with food and roses for the very soldiers who were meant to stop them, by force if need be. Not a shot was fired, yet the sitting president was forced to resign.

Sheltered by navy blue umbrellas with similar white t-shirts and carrying signs that read “No to One-Party Rule,” a quarter of a million to half a million people have repeatedly gathered in Hong Kong demanding an end to China’s one-party rule, despite threats of violence from Beijing.

Indonesian students, teachers, nurses, and even security officers amassed throughout their nation. Some were threatened, some “disappeared.” Yet, when almost a thousand protestors were killed in a government operation to halt the organizing, roughly one million demonstrators flooded the streets of the capital and other towns and cities. In the end, a dictator who had been in place for over three decades lost power.

What new global and state conditions are enabling this surge of “people power?” What characteristics define these peaceful revolutions? How might peace workers, scholars, civil society, and even governments themselves encourage them? Are they proving sustainable? Should they be encouraged? How should government and international organizations respond? This fascinating and potentially revolutionary trend raises a number of questions which peace workers and policy makers must answer.

Forward

While one must always be cautious about overly optimistic predictions of an emerging global civil society or sweeping new democratic reform, such examples of “people power” constitute an emerging trend of genuine deep democracy across the globe, which governments and international organizations will increasingly have to contend with in their policymaking. New leaders have emerged who called upon the ideals and techniques of Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi.

Consider, for example, the demonstrations across the world against the recent war in Iraq. Those protests represented millions of people in the US, the UK, Japan, South Korea, Italy, Spain, Latin America, the Middle East, and throughout Africa (nearly half a million gathered in London alone!). Thus, it represented the largest and most powerful gathering of civil society globally that the world has ever witnessed. It’s quite true that these demonstrations did not have their intended effect, but the size and scale of the mobilization, and its global nature, which crossed boundaries of class, gender, nationality, and faith was unprecedented.

On November 1, 2003, 100,000 Israeli demonstrators converged in Tel Aviv to protest Sharon’s policies towards Palestine. They believe that these policies are in the interest of neither Palestine, nor Israel. What is interesting about this, however, is that while this demonstration did make the news in many global outlets, it was not mentioned at all by the mainstream American

press. Similarly (though there was some coverage), some Europeans report that they were not aware of the large demonstrations against the Iraq War in New York, Washington, San Francisco and other US cities. All told, mass demonstrations in cities across the globe totaled as many as ten million protestors, constituting the largest unified expression of civil society the world has yet seen (SunStar Online). As we will see in our case studies, the role of the media in peace and conflict is critical.

Of course, as most political scientists have noted, for the last several centuries, democracy seems to have increased gradually across the globe, from the revolutions of the 18th Century, to the collapse of the Soviet Empire at the end of the 20th Century. Yet, the rising tide of deep democracy is something altogether new and different. Citizens are increasingly making use of peaceful means to bring about social change. The movement to shape global economy around the needs of people, rather than the other way around, continues throughout Africa and Latin America especially, but also in North America and Europe as well. This can be seen in the movement for debt cancellation for impoverished nations, fair trade, and reform of the Bretton Woods institutions.

This people power movement for economic justice found its most powerful expression in Seattle, at the 1999 World Trade Organization meetings. Tens of thousands of people from various nations and backgrounds nearly brought the city of Seattle to a standstill, and did succeed in shutting down or delaying

some of the meetings of the WTO. Indeed, a state of emergency was declared and a city-wide curfew imposed (“Seattle” Online). The protestors carried signs, chanted, blocked traffic, and marched through the streets where the meetings which would determine the shape and scope of global trade were held. They represented a stunning variety of sectors — labor, faith and solidarity groups, environmentalists, Southern civil society groups from around the globe, as well as a small group of anarchists in gas masks, all cooperated to demand that the needs of the poor be made a central priority of the international financial institutions.

While the handful of anarchists did vandalize property, the rest of the protestors were peaceful, even taking it upon themselves to stop the anarchists. The demonstrators used music, street theatre, banners, sit ins and other forms of civil disobedience to make their demands heard. Prompting Amnesty International to call for an investigation, some protestors were tear-gassed, pepper sprayed, and fired upon with rubber bullets; some had their noses broken! Symbolic of the global nature of this movement, as protestors in Seattle marched, protestors throughout France, London and Switzerland marched in solidarity with those in Seattle (“Trade Talks” Online).

The legacy of what is now often called “The Battle of Seattle” remains alive. Since 1999, each meeting of the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO has been met with demonstrations and civil protests. The demands of the people committed to this move-

ment remain the same: fair trade for the poorest, labor rights, environmental standards and freedom from debt slavery. The impetus behind this mobilization of global civil society is the same as the nonviolent revolutions profiled below: an insistence that the rights and basic needs of the people be respected, and that civil participation in decision making is a must for just policies.

Civil society influenced the World Bank in other ways as well. One little known example of this resulted from the work of the Campaign for Tibet, a non-governmental organization who advocates for that nation. The World Bank had (against its own regulations and procedures) approved funding for a program in China which would have relocated 20,000 Chinese farmers to Tibet! The Campaign for Tibet discovered this, and responded with a week of demonstrations outside the World Bank. Reportedly someone even hung a banner denigrating the Bank's president, James Wolfenson. When he discovered this and the illegality of the funding for this program, the funding was terminated and the program cancelled. This was an especially significant victory for the economic justice movement, since it represents the first time a civil group, an expression of people power, succeeded in persuading the World Bank to change its policies.

The most recent Indian elections, in May 2004, reveal similar dynamics. Three hundred million people voted, but it was largely the rural poor who influenced the vote, which resulted in the

ouster of the incumbent party whose policies had generated wealth for India's middle and upper classes, but not for the lower classes. In many cases, revolutions such as this have borne the fruit of real, sustainable change. This change is proving contagious, as new technologies and international forums provide mechanisms for civil society to organize and express concerns.

Peace scholar Hannah Arendt once wrote of the importance of distinguishing between force and strength. She noted that despite what she considered to be the regrettable intellectual imprecision of so many political scientists and sociologists who equate force and power, historically, even monarchies have had to create consent for their policies in order to be seen as legitimate. She posited that power and force are actually opposites. One can always tell when a regime is losing true power by its increasing displays of force, she argued. Force, then, is actually a tell-tale sign of weakness because, as Arendt noted, force is not necessary when one exercises true power. Arendt defined this true power as the ability to persuade and create consensus. As she summarized, "politically speaking, it is insufficient to say that power and violence are not the same. Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent" (Arendt 71).

One can see this dynamic consistently displayed in the following case studies of "people power" nonviolent revolutions ("Track 6" of Multi-Track Diplomacy) as they unfolded in Nepal, Indonesia, Belgrade, Hong Kong, and Georgia. The following case studies will illustrate these characteristics and hopefully shed

some light on what is causing these movements, as well as what seems to have allowed them to succeed, whether or not this success might be sustainable, and what policies might now be necessary with this new global political reality.

Nepal: 1990 A Certificate of the People's Sovereignty

We are not going to let up our fight for democracy.

*There will be more and more people joining the
movement in coming days.*

~Krishna Machhethu, Nepalese Political Analyst

TIMELINE

1955	King Tribhuwan dies; King Mahendra takes throne
1959	Mahendra adopts multi-party constitution
1960	Nepali Congress Party (NCP) wins elections; B. P. Koirala elected premier
	Mahendra suspends the constitution and parliament
1962	New constitution begins non-party system over which King Mahendra has complete power
1972	Mahendra dies, Birenda becomes king
1980	Push for reform, King allows only non-party elections
1985	Nepali Congress Party begins civil disobedience campaign, and boycotts non-party elections
Feb-Mar 1990	Massive pro-democracy demonstrations result in death of hundreds of civilian protestors
8 Apr 1990	King Birendra agrees to a constitutional monarchy
1996	Maoist "People's War" declared
1 Jun 2001	Royal family murdered; Gyanendra assumes throne
Oct 2002	King disbands Parliament in response to Maoists
Jan 2003	Maoists offer ceasefire
Aug 2003	Maoists terminate ceasefire
4 Oct 2003	King assumes executive powers, fires Prime Minister

In the capital and throughout all of Nepal, beginning in March 1990, for fifty days and nights, a massive demonstration demanded that King Birendra allow the absolute monarchy, which had been in place for 3,000 years, to progress to a constitutional monarchy. The pro-democracy advocates peacefully forced the king to reduce his power to essentially that of a ceremonial monarch. Despite numerous deaths which attracted the notice of the international media, despite demonstrations and even general strikes, which brought Katmandu to a standstill, the government was typically reluctant to devolve power. In fact, it claimed that there was no need for such protests as Nepal already was a democracy! (“Himalayan” Online). Yet countless reports of relentless demands for change continued day after day and the death toll mounted as soldiers fired on the protestors who were usually students, university faculty, striking doctors, and other professionals.

As the Economist reports, “the trigger happy security forces killed at least fifty people who were marching peacefully to the royal palace” (“God-King” Online). Similarly, the Japanese Economic Newswire was filled with reports of demonstrations and shootings; Time magazine likewise reported nearly a hundred demonstrators killed at one rally, dozens at another (“Taste” Online)(“Battle” Online).

In the end, however, the new constitution cited the Nepalese people as “the source of authority” and reduced the King to a constitutional monarch. Considering that many Nepalese revered him as the incarnation of a god, and that the monarchy had been

in place in Nepal for three thousand years, the deep cultural change brought on by grassroots activism is astonishing. Indeed, as one analyst wrote, the “relentless and uninterrupted struggle by the banned Nepali Congress and various Communist factions to restore democracy” was one of the major forces responsible for bringing about “the downfall of the panchayat system” and the birth of Nepal’s constitutional monarchy (Khadka).

The constitution, deemed by the government a “certificate of the peoples’ sovereignty,” specifically made political parties legal once again, providing for the necessary opposition and checks on state power which are so essential to a functioning democracy. The new constitution also guaranteed “fundamental rights, protection of liberty, and the due process of law” (Khadka). It did, however, allow the monarchy to suspend those powers in the event of an “emergency,” though legislative consultation or consent was needed to do so. Evidence of the fierce legal struggle between the democrats and the monarchists, the new constitution forbids the King from vetoing legislation. Yet, it also requires the monarchy’s consent for legislation to become law (Khadka). As expected in a new democracy, various news media outlets developed. A bicameral legislature was created, and elections organized.

Once again, the role of the military was, though perhaps in the background, essential to the success of the revolution. Some reports, for example, suggest that there were hints of the military being willing to “step in” for the king, were he unable put down

the demonstrations (“God-King” Online). Perhaps mindful of this, the king of course did relinquish quite a bit of monarchical power hoping to quell the demonstrations. Not surprisingly, the new role and place of the military was the subject of intense debate and scrutiny as the constitution was written and rewritten. Many political scientists have long noted the crucial importance of civilian control of the military. Other failed revolutions (for example, in Latin America) have demonstrated the essential nature of this principal for a successful democracy. Naturally, as the *Economist* reported at the time, “the King’s supporters oppose taking command of the army away from him and putting it under civilian control” (“King’s Hand” Online). In the end, the constitution placed control of the armed forces under the elected government’s National Defense Council. Indeed, one of the problems Nepal has faced in institutionalizing and sustaining its democratic popular revolution is that “the Nepali Congress government has not been able to buy the loyalty and commitment of the military and police force....[which] is still very loyal to the palace” (Khadka). This potentially threatens the civilian control of the armed forces.

Traditional symbolism found its way into the demonstrations and celebrations which erupted after the King agreed to a parliamentary democracy, with political parties legal again after decades of autocratic rule. The *Washington Post* reported, “Businessmen, beggars, rickshaw drivers, students, children, and tourists dabbed their faces with red paint — a Hindu rite of celebration — and poured through the streets in spontaneous demon-

strations.” Many of them waved the flags of various political parties in celebration of their newly-won freedom; this was formerly an offense that could have resulted in a prison sentence.

The demonstrators were successful, yet this success for Nepal has proven difficult to sustain, and the end result continues to unfold. The World Organization Against Torture reports:

Our sources indicate that on April 8th, 2004, an order banning public demonstrations and the assembly of more than five persons within the Kathmandu Ring Road and Lalitpur areas was issued by the Kathmandu District Administration. Following this, demonstrators have been violently repressed, with demonstrators having been beaten and potentially several thousand persons have been arbitrarily arrested without warrants by the armed police. (World Online)

Furthermore, “the government so far has failed to make a dent on Nepal’s economic problems” (Khadka). Legal battles have also been fought over the right to use indigenous languages. Most clearly, of course, the Maoist insurgency, which is trying to remove the elected government, represents a threat to the democracy Nepal has built. Yet many of the necessary legal protections and institutions for a free society are in place, suggesting the possibility for the long-term success of Nepal’s nonviolent, democratic revolution.

Indonesia—“Reformasi!”1998

We will continue the struggle,

Whatever the Government does,

Even if that means we die!

~Pandu Gunawan, student democracy leader

TIMELINE

11 Mar 1966	General Suharto handed “emergency powers”after a failed leftist coup leads to the killing of hundreds of thousands of suspected Communists
27 Mar 1968	Suharto becomes president
1976	Indonesia invades East Timor
1997	Asian economic crisis
1998	Economic insecurity and political repression spur massive pro-democracy demonstrations
12 May 1998	Six pro-democracy activists killed by Indonesian security forces
18 May 1998	Students occupy Parliament building with no intervention from armed forces
21 May 1998	President Suharto forced from office by massive, nonviolent demonstrations; Vice President Habibie sworn in as president
1999	Free elections: Wahid elected President
2000	President faces financial scandals
Jul 2001	Parliament dismissed Wahid. Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri sworn in as president

As with nearly all of the “people power” revolutions captured in this study, Indonesia’s was led by its youth and students. Suharto had seized power from an attempted communist coup, and held Indonesia in his grip for over three decades. “Defaming” the president was illegal, and those who did so were known to disappear. Still, there were those Indonesians and Western leaders who appreciated the stability Suharto had secured, as well as a tangible reduction in poverty (which, however, did not survive the East Asian crisis). They further appreciated the trade route Indonesia provided and actually at one point referred to Suharto as a “statesman.” (Barr Online).

Those acknowledgements aside, Suharto and his dictatorial policies simply lost the consent of the governed. As with our other case studies, this “people power” revolution was galvanized by a brutal crackdown reminiscent of Tiananmen Square. The military crackdown on protest riots left more than a thousand people dead and “galvanized a nation” (Barr Online). With shouts of “reformasi,” and even at one point burning Suharto in effigy, the students filled the streets and as their demonstrations continued, they were increasingly joined by faculty, parents, journalists, nurses, and — crucially — the police. One jailed leading student protester, Morsid Mudiantoro, even told of officers helping him escape. “Everybody wanted to help,” he reported, indicating the widespread sympathy with both pro-democratic and anti-Suharto forces. This became clear to everyone when the number of protestors at one demonstration reached nearly a million people (Kristof Online).

As ever, the role of the military was central; one analyst actually refers to their role as that of an “intermediary” (Nas). The Indonesian military “avoided direct confrontation with pro-democracy protestors and played a more behind-the-scenes role in seeing to it that the anti-Suharto movement [did] not become a full-scale toppling of the entire military and business elite” (Sivaraman Online). The loss of the support of the military was the nail in the regime’s coffin. There were even rumors that “elements in the military [were] quietly backing the students” (Kristof Online). Nas points to “the anti-communist attitude gaining ground in the military,” which rendered them “highly sympathetic” when the demonstrators, especially the Muslim groups, called for a ban on the communist party. Regardless of the extent to which this was true, “it was the military that allowed the students to get on with their actions,” as they pursued a policy mainly of noninvolvement, simply containing the demonstrations to campuses and Parliament (Nas Online).

Media technologies also aided the popular revolution. In our other case studies, either some vestiges of a free press were in place, such as in Georgia, or new communications technologies enabled democrats to organize beyond the reach of the government, as in the former Soviet Union or in China presently. As the InterPress Service reported, “Indonesia’s turbulent events have been blacked out by government-run news and media channels,” yet “many Burmese have been able to follow the events closely by listening to international radio broadcasts.” This of course has been worrisome to the military junta in Burma, which fears that

a successful democracy in its neighboring Indonesia will be contagious.

Domestically, Suharto's repression of the press was less effective due to the sheer mass of resistance against his regime. People did not need to read about the protests — if they were not in one, they still most likely witnessed them.

New technologies proved simply too difficult to regulate sufficiently. For example, "One factor the government had not counted on was that the protest actions taking place on a great number of campuses all over Indonesia were coordinated by the Internet." Also, the actual occupation of the Parliament building was "coordinated by the use of the Internet and mobile telephones" (Nas).

Further broadening and strengthening this movement, the students actively reached out to other like-minded groups, such as women's organizations and organized labor. A Muslim group which apparently has 28 million members also endorsed the demonstrations for democracy. The demonstrators were supported by other citizens, who supplied them with food and water (Nas). This resulted in a critical mass that the government simply could not deny, which became particularly critical when the government lost the support of its armed forces.

Indonesia echoes another theme of our other case studies, as well — the role of international context. For example, as Kristof writes in the *New York Times*, an Indonesian professor explained

that Suharto's options were actually rather limited: "The Government is cautious about taking action, because it would attract international attention." Ironically, perhaps its role as an important trade route restricted Suharto's options, just as it had once to some extent protected him. So long as he provided stability, other nations were not likely to intervene. No doubt aware of the power of international support, some demonstrators — in a predominantly Muslim nation — paid tribute to the United States by shouting "Long Live America" near the American Embassy (Nas Online).

The use of symbolism to communicate and mobilize was a part of this "people power" movement, as it was in Georgia and Belgrade. Nas and Sluis explain that the use of architecture and space was especially significant. They write, "The basic idea is that the events during this 'reformation' were not randomly dispersed throughout the capital. On the contrary, the sites of the incidents had specific symbolic meanings chosen to convey the intentions of the particular groups involved to a wider public, even to the international forum covered by mass media" (Nas). Specifically, they note, "the sites chosen or avoided for protests, riots, and rituals throw light on the significance of these places in Indonesian culture" (Nas). Merdeka Square was chosen because it is "the center of a circle of monuments in Jakarta symbolizing Indonesian nation building" that "constitute the symbolic heritage of the Old Order vested under Sukarno." Another example of this is the choice of the demonstrating students to wear jackets

sporting their University colors (remembering the animosity between the university intellectuals and the Suharto regime).

Naturally, analysts and citizens watch and wonder if the dramatic changes in Indonesia will be sustainable. The signs from the most recent election are quite positive, so much so that the Economist recently called Indonesia “a shining example” that “deserves great praise for its speedy transition from autocracy, through chaos, to democracy.” The elections were “free, fair, peaceful, and above all, conducted in a spirit of moderation that was remarkable in a country where democracy is only six years old.” Exemplifying the crucial importance of strong leadership, current president Megawati “urged everyone to accept the result, whatever the result, even though she seems unlikely to remain in office” (“Example” Online). This of course sets a significant example and precedent for her opponents and future presidents for peaceful, orderly transfers of power, and leadership that is willing to concede defeat at the polls. Perhaps even more significantly, Indonesian voters, having demanded democracy, seem determined to protect and uphold it. Voters “by a large margin, preferred a moderate military man to a nationalist throwback” (“Example” Online). Significantly, none of the parties calling for sharia (Islamic law) were able to garner much support. Having seen some success in fighting extremism, corruption, and poverty, and having just conducted an election which many predicted would be impossible for a predominantly Islamic country, Indonesia offers ample reason to hope for the permanent success of its peaceful, democratic revolution.

Yugoslavia: 2000

*If we have to defend our victory on the streets, we'll
do that.*

We've had enough!

~a Belgrade store clerk

TIMELINE

1991	The Soviet Union collapses, and Yugoslavia dissolves into break-away provinces; majority of Serbs are expelled from Croatia
Apr 1992	Slobodan Milosevic emerges as leader of the Serbia and Montenegro Provinces after ethnic war erupts, causing the death and displacement of millions
Nov 1995	Dayton Peace Accords signed
Mar 1998	Responding to unrest and attacks in Kosovo, Milosevic sends in troops, and war reignites
Mar 1999	NATO launches air strikes against Serbian targets
24 Sep 2000	Vojislav Kostunica, the Opposition Leader, wins the popular elections; Milosevic refuses to heed results.
Oct 2000	Massive demonstrations, totaling nearly a million people, shut down Belgrade and beyond; Milosevic is forced to step down. Kostunica takes office
Apr 2001	Milosevic arrested for crimes against humanity
Jun 2001	Milosevic remanded to the International Criminal Court at The Hague

As in so many of these cases, it was a disputed election that sparked the revolt. The Federal Elections Commission was at the time controlled by Milosevic, and his regime refused to enact most international free and fair election standards. The ballots were counted behind closed doors, foreign reporters were expelled, and “independent poll monitors complained that the elections were plagued from start to finish by wide-scale voting irregularities, intimidation, and ballot stuffing designed to benefit the regime.” Some state employees were told by their bosses “to vote for Milosevic if they wanted to keep their jobs.” One report even stated that Milosevic had ballots with his name checked off preprinted! Significantly, Nikola Sainovic, former Milosevic spokesman, even conceded privately that “the regime knew that they lost on all levels” (Rozen Online). Yet publicly, the regime declared victory. Further, “Milosevic and local SPS [Milosevic’s Serbian Socialist Party] officials refused to hand over local power and tried to give their arbitrary decision legality by forcing election commissions and courts to annul the results on spurious legal grounds” (Sekelj Online). Thus, it was hardly a surprise to international observers or citizens of Serbia when, in September of 2000, nearly half a million opposition members, students, and demonstrators for democracy descended upon Belgrade demanding that Milosevic honor the genuine results of the election, concede, and hand over power.

Milosevic’s totalitarian tactics were in place throughout the protests. For example, the streets were lined with armed police, and plain clothes officers even infiltrated the marches. So dis-

guised, they followed at least several dozen people to their homes and then jailed them without access to lawyers or family. One former parliamentarian suggested that the rise in police brutality was a warning to voters that Milosevic would not tolerate another scene such as in 1996, “when hundreds of thousands of people were on the streets for months” (Todorovic). This was in stark contrast to the techniques of the students, who organized a civil disobedience group, “Otpor” (which means Resistance). Much like other similar student groups (many of whom were actually inspired by Otpor), Otpor was committed to non-violence. Further, this commitment was explicit, thus perhaps lessening the likelihood of demonstrators returning violence for violence. We can see again the importance of the role of leadership in maintaining a sustained, peaceful campaign for social change.

As in Georgia, the leaders of the movement publicly defined themselves as nonviolent. Kostunica himself, who of course had actually won the election, called for peace at the demonstrations: “We must persist in a peaceful manner and respond to violence with non-violence and to lies with truth” (“Yugoslavia Annals” Online).

Otpor and other resistance groups also used campaigns of civil disobedience prior to the massive demonstrations. These actions included strikes and using buses and even bulldozers to break through police blockades (“Yugoslavia” Online). Other nonviolent civil disobedience tactics included a staggering 20,000 citizens coming to the rescue of coal mine strike organizers after

Milosevic declared a crack-down on the strikers, arguing that they threatened national electricity. Other strikers and activists built barricades with dump trucks and dirt mounds, hoping to bring the nation to a halt until Milosevic resigned (“Strikes, Protests” Online).

As we have seen in nearly every other case study here, symbolism has proven to be a powerful tool in the design of the demonstrations. The symbolism used by the students in Belgrade was particularly poignant. Their logo, a clenched fist, “has become a popular symbol of putting national interests above opposition squabbles.” This was especially critical in the case of Belgrade, as the opposition to Milosevic had previously been bitterly divisive, fragmented, and, thus, ineffective (Todorovic). As Balkans analyst Laslo Sekelj explained, “The opposition entered the electoral campaign unprepared, divided by internecine squabbles and without a convincing alternative programme to the policy of SPS and Milosevic” (Sekelj Online).

Once this fragmentation was overcome by the formation of the Democratic Opposition, a coalition of various opposition groups, Milosevic’s power waned significantly. Employing another symbol, some students stacked bricks along the streets of Belgrade, expressing their desire to rebuild and be peaceful and constructive, rather than destructive. Even more startling, another group left a loaf of bread on the steps of the government building, a traditional Yugoslavian symbol of friendship (BBC Online). This seems to suggest the students’ desire for a peaceful

change of power, rather than a violent civil war. Doubtless, most Serbians (and everyone else in the former Yugoslavia) had suffered more than enough. Perhaps the students meant to suggest to Milosevic that he would not be harmed; the goal was simply recognition of the genuine election results.

The role of the media is always crucial, and Belgrade was no exception. Otpor and other opposition groups were labeled terrorists and even “satanized” by state media. Rumors of a new “law on terrorism” swirled, which “would give the government lavish legal power against its most dangerous political opponents” (Todorovic Online; Sekelj Online). Hence, the necessary fear was created to solidify some sort of support for the Milosevic regime.

One analyst detailed this state monopoly of the media: “Clear and unequivocal abuse of state television, the basic source of information, and the most influential daily news paper Politika, as well as a series of other media, by the ruling party has existed in all parliamentary and presidential elections...” For one example, B2-92, an independent radio station, reported the dismissal of nearly 200 employees who were “fired for demanding a change in editorial policy” (Radio Free Europe Online).

However, and this cannot be overemphasized, just as in Georgia, the state monopoly of information “has never been total” (Skeklj). This allowed some information to filter through to the citizens of Serbia, strengthening the student, opposition, and pro-democracy organizations, as well as the international community

who enacted sanctions and political isolation against Milosevic. (We should note that some argue this inadvertently played into Milosevic's hands as it aided him in demonizing the West, free markets, and democracy. Milosevic was quoted as warning voters, "With the money that they have received from abroad, [the West] is buying, blackmailing and scaring citizens." His rhetoric implied that a vote for the opposition was a vote for those who had caused the NATO bombing).

The international press was also able to bring news of the staggering poverty and totalitarianism of Milosevic's regime and, perhaps most importantly, news of the massive, months-long waves of protests that resulted from the fraudulent elections. CNN and BBC, for example, were both able to report the contesting of Milosevic's "victory," as well as the eventual annulment of the results. Besides encouraging the resistance movement, heads of state and world leaders at the time, such as Kofi Annan and Bill Clinton, clearly desired his removal from power. The US-funded opposition movement and, of course, international sanctions devastated an already war-ravaged economy. Further weakening Milosevic internationally, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and the United Nations all declared the victory of his opponent, Kostunica (Ahern Online).

Eventually, the regime could no longer deny reality and on October 3, 2000, Slobodan Milosevic stepped down from power. He was shortly thereafter arrested by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity. All of the traditional signs of

a successful civil revolution were present. We examined the role of the media above; it is also notable that the armed forces and police force played a significant role in Milosevic's downfall as well. The army's conscripted soldiers had little cause for loyalty to the regime, especially once the demonstrations proved unrelenting and peaceable. Many of the officers and soldiers, scarcely happier with Milosevic than the protesters, joined them.

As the above numbers suggest, a "critical mass of citizens from the provinces" swarmed into the city in bus loads. This is a familiar recipe for a powerful nonviolent revolution.

Hong Kong: One State, Two Systems?2003

*If Hong Kong does not become democratic,
there is no future for her!*

~Jeff Chan, at a rally for democracy

TIMELINE

1997	Hong Kong gains independence from Britain: China chooses Tung Chee-hwa as Chief Executive
1 Jul 2003	500,000 protest "anti-subversion" law
7 Jul 2003	Tung Chee-hwa withdraws "anti-subversion" bill
Jul 2003	Security Secretary Regina Ip, who was largely responsible for the "anti-subversion" bill, resigns
Apr 2004	China assumes veto-power over elections
1 Jul 2004	Hundreds of thousands protest for direct elections

500,000 people demonstrated in Hong Kong on July 1st, 2003. Demonstrations continue, and appear to be slowly but surely loosening the grip of China's one-party rule, which insists that Hong Kong is and should remain a part of China. The size and tenacious persistence of these protests are remarkable, particularly considering the personal risk undertaken by those involved.

In many of our case studies, a fraudulent election sparked the movement for nonviolent, democratic change. In the case of Hong Kong, the focal point of most of the recent demonstrations has been a recent "anti-subversion" law that China attempted to pass, which resulted in half a million citizens marching in protest, as well as subsequent candlelight vigils, and other, smaller marches.

Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's Chief Executive, was forced to rethink his previous support for the law, which had presumably resulted from pressure by China. His change in stance was due to a combination of the massive protests as well as the resignation of a prominent cabinet member from the Liberal Party, James Tien ("People Power" Online). One report called this "an unprecedented political defeat" for Mr. Chee-hwa (Beveridge Online).

The reviled law would have allowed police to search without a warrant. It also would have given the government power to ban certain types of assembly: namely groups already outlawed on the mainland. The attempt to pass the anti-subversion law was preceded by pronouncements on April 6, 2004, by China's National People's Congress (NPC) that "made it clear... that any move to introduce greater democracy in Hong Kong will need prior clearance." This was a reversal of prior Chinese policy. Nearly ten years had passed since the Chinese government had issued a proclamation on the "Basic Law," which created the "one state, two systems" model after Hong Kong gained its independence from Britain in 1997. China currently claims no possibility that it will recognize Hong Kong elections before 2008 ("One Country" Online).

In response, the Article 45 Concern Group, a group of constitutional scholars from Hong Kong, has formed. They argue that China's refusal to allow elections and the provisions included in

the “anti-subversion” law are “a naked use of power with no legal basis” (Marquand Online).

The international and geopolitical context has left its mark on the conflict. Various US leaders, including the US National Security Advisor, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, have made statements supporting the right of the people of Hong Kong to seek political reform. China’s party line has been to insist that Hong Kong already enjoys “real and unprecedented democracy,” and that any support of any kind from the US would be viewed as an unwelcome intrusion into domestic affairs. A spokeswoman for the Communist government, for example, said China was “resolutely opposed to foreign interference.” (BreakingNews.com). Still, China’s refusal to allow direct elections “brought the strongest censure yet from the US and Britain” (Marquand Online).

As recently as July 2004, nearly half a million protestors rallied once again in support of democratic reforms. The specific demand of the most recent rally was for direct elections in 2007; many marchers also called on Chehwa, appointed by China, to step down. The make up of the demonstration was, appropriately, democratic, including “grandmothers, young parents, punk-rockers, and stockbrokers” and the size of the demonstration effectively killed any hope that China might have had that the demand for greater freedoms would wane. One demonstrator was quoted as insisting, “I know that’s what they say, no vote in 2007. But we are going to keep putting the pressure on. We will take to the streets till we can vote” (Marquand Online). Appar-

ently, the stunning turnout to the rally would have been even greater had it not been for dangerously intense heat. Some marchers held black balloons which were to represent the presence of family members who could not participate. The line of protestors reportedly stretched for two miles.

The symbolism used in these protests was clearly designed to communicate unity. Hundreds of thousands of participants wore white, which is the color of mourning in China (Marquand Online). This was reminiscent of last year's protests aimed directly at the "anti-subversion law," when the marches all wore black. Even the brutal heat was used as an opportunity to challenge the oppression from the mainland, and to demonstrate a forceful show of numbers: "Many sported umbrellas with the word "suffrage," and cooled themselves with fans that read "power to the people" (Marquand). In an effort to communicate to China that their desire is for democracy, not an expression of protest against China, many demonstrators carried olive branches (Pan Online). Even the date of the march was symbolic; it was held on July 1st, the anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from Britain to China.

Needless to say, the Chinese media was nearly silent about the demonstration, and the Hong Kong media seems to have been largely cowed. For example, "a study released this week by the Hong Kong Journalists Association looked at the city's 14 leading newspapers from Jan. 28 to March 8—a period corresponding with a 'patriotism debate' introduced by Beijing." The results

were that “of all headlines during that period, 55 percent supported the patriot litmus test, while only 15 percent back the pro-democracy position.” Further, several radio hosts were forced to leave their jobs after receiving threatening phone calls (Marquand Online). In fact, some of the signs that demonstrators carried paid tribute to them, bearing their pictures and reading, “Please Come Back!”

Many have found China’s response to be particularly draconian, especially considering that Hong Kong’s demand has been for direct elections and reform, not independence. Martin Lee, a well known activist for democracy, made this explicit: “We are here today to fight for democracy... Not a single person here wants independence” (Lyn). Many activists, and even those suspected of considering voting for the Democratic Party, report receiving violently threatening phone calls and having their jobs threatened (Lyn). Further, those Beijing deemed “unpatriotic” were automatically considered unfit for public office (Marquand).

The resolution of this conflict remains to be seen. Elections are approaching in September, and one Hong Kong political analyst, Christine Loh, predicted that “Beijing will try to win the hearts and minds of Hong Kong people because of these elections” (YahooNews Online). The effective display of “people power” successfully halted the passage of widely detested legislation; perhaps the recent demonstrations, which have been just as massive and have received considerable international attention, can win the vote!

Georgia's Rose Revolution

Kmara! (Enough!)

~Student Resistance Group Slogan

TIMELINE

2 Nov 2003	Parliamentary elections criticized as fraudulent. Officials declare President Shevardnadze the winner
23 Nov 2003	Thousands demonstrate in support of opposition candidate, Mikhail Saakashvili. Demonstrators take over parliament building Shevardnadze resigns
4 Jan 2004	New elections held. Saakashvili wins
23 Jan 2004	Abashidze, Adjarian leader, declares state of emergency in protest of Saakashvili victory; Demonstrators demand Abashidze's resignation
Mar 2004	Abashidze resigns and leaves Georgia; Adjarian Parliamentary elections held; Saakashvili's party wins majority.

The Republic of Georgia's recent peaceful (if fragile) change of power provides a near blueprint for future peaceful demonstrations and non-violent transitions to democracy. Many of the necessary conditions were in place: a leadership that explicitly called for peaceful demonstrations, some sort of established relationships with international NGOs, the beginnings of civil society, and some outlets of a free press which were able to cover both the demonstrations and the charges of government corruption. The opposition leader, now President Mikhail Saakashvili, also employed a unique and powerfully symbolic strategy which gained the allegiance of the government's security forces. Some

analysts also note that the US and Russian strategic interests in the area compelled them to be involved in a peaceful resolution to the dispute. For example, Russian foreign minister, Igor Ivanov personally helped negotiate Shevardnadze's resignation from office, and US envoy James Baker was sent to assist the formation of the Central Election Commission.

Non-violent popular demonstrations tend to be sparked, after dissatisfaction has been steadily growing, by a specific event that symbolizes all of the other dissatisfactions. As was the case in Georgia, an election perceived to be fraudulent caused resistance to mobilize. Directly contradicting all exit polls, the government's election commission declared Shevardnadze the victor. As Civil Disobedience Commission (CDC) member Irakli Kakabadze wrote in his first-hand account, "This was the final blow to the disenfranchised citizenry of Georgia and they decided that dramatic civil disobedience was necessary" (Kakabadze 3). Kakabadze and other activists and civil leaders met to plan their course of action, guided, as he notes, by such thinkers as Martin Luther King, Jr., Johann Galtung, and Gandhi. A student resistance group called Kmara ("enough") formed, modeled on and mentioned by the Belgrade student group, Otpor. This partnership explicitly suggests the transnational nature of this movement for democracy. Kmara staged demonstrations and rallies demanding Shevardnadze's resignation, and are said to be responsible for the word "Kmara!" being spraypainted on buildings in Tbilisi as resistance mobilized (Miller).

One essential element of this revolution's success was the strategy the CDC used to win the cooperation of the armed forces, which did not fire a single shot at any of the protestors, despite earlier statements by Shevardnadze that he would be willing to use force to stop protests if that proved necessary. Demonstrators announced their clear intent to protest peacefully and, by handing out roses, feeding, and even embracing the soldiers, communicated that they did not wish to fight with the armed forces. Conflict theory sheds light on this process: violent conflicts will usually escalate only if one of the parties perceives a clear threat to identity or survival. Further, the loss of the support of the military seemed to underscore the unpopularity of Shevardnadze's regime.

It remains very much to be seen whether the lack of violence can be sustained. Shortly after the election in which President Saakashvili, who led the peaceful protests against the fraudulent elections of Shevardnadze, was chosen, a bomb was exploded near the headquarters of the Labor Party. No one was hurt, which is perhaps a major reason why it has not thus far incited retaliation. Still, the new government has Herculean challenges ahead if they are to fulfill the promise of their revolution and establish the infrastructure of civil society and democracy, as virtually every analyst points out. Saakashvili, described as a "relative political novice with a fiery temperament," has inherited a bankrupt government, soaring unemployment, gross corruption, poverty (over half the population), and at least two prov-

inces, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, that are headed by separatists ("Georgia Votes", EIW Online).

As in each of these cases, today's reformer could be tomorrow's strongman, which is the reason so many experts watch for institutions and infrastructure to judge a new democracy's progress rather than official statements. It is still quite early to judge this in Saakashvili's case, but there seems to be reason for at least some measure of concern. The new constitution "allows the president to dissolve parliament and considerably weakens the legislature." Further, Saakashvili "has publicly stated that he does not see the need for a parliamentary opposition" (Hays Online). Still, the Rose Revolution seems to demonstrate that Georgia has a strong and growing civil society that is prepared to peacefully protect its new freedoms.

In fact, Kmara's example has proven contagious already! Consider, for example, the current events unfolding in Adjara. Nearly concurrent with Georgia's Rose Revolution, the citizens of this autonomous region of the former Soviet Union began agitating for democracy. Used to power and semi-feudal methods of governance, Adjarian ruler Mr. Abashidze threatened his people with violence. When this did not deter their activism, he brought in Russian military instructors to train his police. This was likewise ineffective. Finally, in May 2004, he had bridges blown up in his own territory! At this, the majority of the population demonstrated in the streets, demanding Abashidze's resignation.

Saakashvili began negotiations, offering Abashidze assurances of safety if he resigned. Meanwhile, the government of Georgia estimated that Abashidze had pilfered roughly 1.5 billion (in US dollars) from his public budget. According to reports, he flew to Moscow and has not been seen in Adjara since (“Abashidze” Online).

Abashidze officially resigned on May 6, 2004, and a temporary administration took power. In the new elections, which were held on June 21, 2004, the National Movement and Republican parties of Georgia won the supreme council seats of Adjara. There was celebrating in the streets at Abashidze’s resignation, and many now refer to this as the “Rose Revolution N2.” The Rose Revolution itself was unprecedented in the Caucasus, and for it to have been essentially repeated elsewhere, albeit on a smaller scale, hopefully suggests the sustainability of these peaceful changes of power and of the beginnings of true democracy in the former Soviet Union.

Conclusions

As is evident from the above cases, peaceful popular revolutions share a number of causes and characteristics in common. One related phenomena we have noticed is that, in every single case study, the ruling elite had lost the support of the military — often, of course, the only means by which the regime was able to keep power. In some cases, the soldiers allowed the demonstrators to proceed unharmed, as the protest was peaceful. Often, the organizers of the resistance explicitly reached out to the military, as was most clearly seen in Georgia. At times, as in Belgrade, the security forces even joined the demonstrators.

A second common characteristic is the skillful and poignant use of symbolism to galvanize civil society, specifically to rally the people around a message that was revolutionary and populist as well as peaceful. Georgia's Rose Revolution, of course, is a powerful example — the students and other protesters not only offered the soldiers guarding the presidential and parliament buildings roses, eyewitnesses and participants report that many of the demonstrators actually hugged them as well!

Belgrade has a similar tale to tell. As Slobodan Milosevic's "victory" in the 2000 elections was being celebrated by his supporters, nearly half a million protesters demanded that he concede the election and admit to the fraud he had perpetrated. Expressive of their desire that the protest be peaceful and constructive, rather than violent, many protesters stacked bricks on

the streets as a symbol of rebuilding. Others brought bread to the government building where Milosevic and the remains of his government were still installed — in Serbian tradition, this bread was a symbol of friendship (“Milosevic” BBC Online). The most recent protest in Hong Kong against the central government in Beijing’s refusal to allow a vote featured its almost half a million participants all wearing white t-shirts in a display of visual unity (Bradsher Online).

The media, including new communications technologies such as cell phones and faxes, have also played central roles in these peaceful revolutions; they provided a means of political organizing and communicating which the government was unable to regulate. One former Russian official even noted that the Soviet Union was brought down, in his view, by the fax machine. As *Reader’s Digest* once reported, “Workers of the World, Fax!” was the headline of a *Washington Post* article in late 1990 during the waning days of the Cold War. Michael Dobbs reported that correspondents in the Soviet Union had gone from having too little information to too much. It was a “revolution by fax”, he wrote, which “has made a mockery of attempts by Communist Party bureaucrats to control the flow of news” (*Reader’s Digest* Online). Similarly, the student democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square are often referred to as a “revolution by fax.” The press in many of these cases also played a central role, providing a means of disseminating information about fraudulent elections, protests against the government and the like. This coverage also helped attract and enable the support of the inter-

national community, another common factor in the success of these historic popular revolutions. As Dr. Kurt Mills wrote, “Gil Scott-Heron says that ‘The revolution will not be televised.’ The global reach of CNN makes that claim doubtful. Regardless, however, the revolution will be digitized, faxed, e-mailed, uploaded, and generally be available electronically to a large portion of humanity” (“Cybernations” Online). Despite the opportunities that this presents, these new technologies are not available to two-thirds of the world. Access to electricity and even literacy, in an ever more printed world, is a must if the poorest of the poor are to close this digital divide, and thus have some hope of bettering their situations.

International context and the connections between domestic resistance groups, such as Otpor in Belgrade or Kmara in Georgia, was also influential. The concerns of various neighboring nations, as well as the involvement of powers such as the US, the EU, the UN and Russia, in some cases provided pressure on the sitting government to concede falsified elections, or enact certain democratic reforms. Without disregarding the number of valid concerns many have expressed about globalization, this process as represented by new technologies and international forums of governance can offer crucial advantages to voices who otherwise would struggle to be heard.

Nepal, Indonesia, Belgrade, Hong Kong and Georgia all offer hope that peaceful social change is possible. Some of the resistant groups, most notably Otpor and Kmara, were explicitly linked,

with Otpor mentoring Kmara during its Rose Revolution. Yet all of these movements are connected by a common zeitgeist — a passionate belief that peaceful change is possible and a growing conviction across the globe that fundamental human and civil rights are not negotiable; hence the contagious nature of these movements. They also, however, represent a new and growing trend across the globe of civil political expression, possibly the nascent beginnings of a global civil society. This is perhaps most evident in the protests against globalization as we know it. Citizens are demonstrating for change because they know the North/South gap, the gap between the wealthy minority and the poor masses, is growing larger, not smaller. They are demanding that their needs be a priority.

If this new phenomenon of peaceful revolutions is to be dealt with effectively, in a manner that protects civil freedoms and human rights regardless of in what nation one was born, governments will soon find it necessary to begin creating policies and institutional mechanisms to respond to these demonstrations of people power. Most importantly, governments must learn how to listen to their people to determine what their needs are before violence occurs; once a conflict begins to escalate to violence, it becomes astronomically more difficult to resolve peacefully. Presently, governments are not changing with this new reality, and their people are leaving them behind.

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Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy

From 1978-83, he carried out a wide variety of assignments for the State Department in the area of multilateral diplomacy. He was President of the INTELSAT World Conference called to draft a treaty on privileges and immunities; leader of the U.S. Delegation to the UN World Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, in Buenos Aires in 1978; Secretary General of the 27th Colombo Plan Ministerial Meeting; head of the U.S. Delegation which negotiated a UN Treaty Against the Taking of Hostages; U.S. Coordinator for the UN Decade on Drinking Water and Sanitation; head of the U.S. Delegation to UNIDO III in New Delhi in 1980; Chairman of the Federal Inter-Agency Committee for the UN's International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981; U.S. Coordinator and head of the U.S. Delegation for the UN's World Assembly on Aging, in Vienna, in 1982.

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The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization incorporated in Arlington, VA. Founded in 1992 by Ambassador John W. McDonald and Dr. Louise Diamond, the Institute is built on the premise that the power for peacemaking and peacebuilding resides in the many and not the few. IMTD is committed to the non-violent resolution of ethnic and regional conflict through training, education, and communication.

The Occasional Paper Series published by the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy provides a forum for the exploration, identification, and discussion of the issues in conflict resolution theory and practice being confronted in the work of IMTD. Often based on the direct experiences of professionals working on IMTD projects, these discussions document some of the pioneering work being done in the field of conflict resolution.



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